

OCTOBER 28, 1976

ELECTION '76: THE SOUTH

ANNCR:

MANY OBSERVERS ASSUMED FROM THE START THAT DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE JIMMY CARTER -- THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FROM THE DEEP SOUTH TO BE CHOSEN BY A MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY IN MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED YEARS -- WOULD MAKE A CLEAN SWEEP OF THE SOUTHERN STATES IN NEXT WEEK'S BALLOTING. BUT THE FORMER GEORGIA GOVERNOR HAS ENCOUNTERED SOME UNEXPECTED RESISTANCE, LARGELY BECAUSE OF SOME UNPOPULAR POSITIONS HE'S TAKEN ON KEY ISSUES, AND THE SOUTHERN VOTE MAY NOT BE NEARLY AS STRONG FOR MISTER CARTER AS MANY HAD THOUGHT. FOR A LOOK AT HOW MISTER CARTER STANDS IN THE SOUTH TODAY (OPT) AND AT OTHER RACES IN THE REGION, (END OPT) HERE'S VOA CORRESPONDENT RUSSELL SPLANE IN MIAMI:

VOICE:

IT WAS BACK IN EIGHTEEN FORTY-EIGHT WHEN ZACHARY TAYLOR OF VIRGINIA WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES -- THE LAST SOUTHERNER TO MAKE HIS WAY TO THE WHITE HOUSE. IT'S NOT SURPRISING, THEREFORE, THAT SOUTHERN HEARTS SWELLED WITH PRIDE WHEN JIMMY CARTER OF GEORGIA RECEIVED THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION. ALL SOUTHERN VOTERS, IT WAS ASSUMED, WOULD REJOICE AT THE PROSPECT OF HAVING A SOUTHERNER IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND WITHOUT QUESTION WOULD VOTE FOR MISTER CARTER.

BUT THE FORMER GEORGIA GOVERNOR HAS TAKEN SOME POSITIONS THAT OFFEND TRADITIONALLY CONSERVATIVE SOUTHERNERS. HIS STATED POSITION ON AT LEAST TWO ISSUES -- RIGHT TO WORK LAWS AND GUN CONTROL -- HAS ANTAGONIZED THOUSANDS OF HIS FELLOW SOUTHERNERS AND MAY COST HIM VOTES IN TUESDAY'S ELECTION.

EVERY STATE IN THE SOUTH HAS A RIGHT-TO-WORK LAW. THIS IS A LAW WHICH SAYS A MAN DOES NOT HAVE TO BELONG TO A LABOR UNION IN ORDER TO KEEP A JOB. SOUTHERNERS OVERWHELMINGLY BELIEVE IN THIS RIGHT. FOR YEARS LABOR UNIONS BASED IN THE NORTH HAVE AGITATED TO HAVE SUCH LAWS REPEALED. MISTER CARTER HAS NOW GONE ON RECORD AS SAYING THAT IF THE U.S. CONGRESS ENACTS LEGISLATION TO FORBID SUCH STATE LAWS HE WOULD, AS PRESIDENT, "GLADLY SIGN IT." MANY SOUTHERNERS ARE OUTRAGED AT THIS. THEY REGARD IT AS A BETRAYAL AND AN OPEN INVITATION TO THE CONGRESS TO REPEAL THE RIGHT TO WORK LAW.

THE OTHER UNPOPULAR STAND TAKEN BY MISTER CARTER IS ON GUN CONTROL. HE WANTS ALL OWNERS OF HAND GUNS TO BE REQUIRED TO REGISTER THEIR WEAPONS. MANY SOUTHERNERS ARE HUNTERS AND OUTDOORSMEN; GUNS ARE A WAY OF LIFE AND THEY RESENT EFFORTS TO LEGISLATE THEIR RIGHT TO POSSESS WEAPONS.

POLITICAL ANALYSTS BELIEVE GOVERNOR CARTER HAS LOST OTHER VOTES BY HIS OPPOSITION TO ANY CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT THAT WOULD OUTLAW MOST ABORTIONS. AND THEY FEEL HE'S OFFENDED MORE SOUTHERNERS BY HIS PROPOSAL TO CUT DEFENSE SPENDING BY AS MUCH AS SEVEN THOUSAND MILLION DOLLARS, A MOVE THAT WOULD HAVE ECONOMIC EFFECTS IN THE SOUTH WHERE THE BULK OF THE NATION'S MILITARY BASES AND MANY SHIPYARDS AND AIRCRAFT FACTORIES ARE LOCATED.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF ALL THIS IS THAT MISTER CARTER COULD LOSE AT LEAST TWO SOUTHERN STATES -- AND MAYBE AS MANY AS FOUR. LATEST OPINION POLLS SUGGEST THAT MISSISSIPPI AND LOUISIANA SHOW STRONG SENTIMENT FOR PRESIDENT FORD. TEXAS AND VIRGINIA ALSO ARE CONSIDERED SO CLOSE THAT THE VOTE COULD GO EITHER WAY. SO IT LOOKS AS THOUGH EVEN SOUTHERNER LIKE JIMMY CARTER CANNOT COUNT ON WHAT USED TO BE A SOLIDLY DEMOCRATIC SOUTH.

(OPT) MISTER CARTER IS NOT THE ONLY CANDIDATE IN THE SOUTH WITH PROBLEMS. A NUMBER OF INCUMBENT U.S. SENATORS FACE FORMIDABLE CHALLENGES. IN TENNESSEE REPUBLICAN WILLIAM BROCK FACES FORTY YEAR OLD DEMOCRAT JAMES SASSER, A MAN WHOSE APPEARANCE AND STYLE ARE REMINISCENT OF THE LATE JOHN KENNEDY. IN ONE OF THE STATES USUALLY CONSIDERED ON THE BORDER BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH, MARYLAND, REPUBLICAN J. GLENN BEALL IS IN A CLOSE FIGHT WITH DEMOCRAT PAUL SARBANES, A RHODES SCHOLAR OF GREEK DESCENT WHOM THE OPINION POLLS NOW SHOW IN THE LEAD. AND IN FLORIDA, DEMOCRATIC SENATOR LAWTON CHILES -- WHO WON ELECTION SIX YEARS AGO BY WALKING THE LENGTH OF FLORIDA -- IS BEING CHALLENGED BY ARCH-CONSERVATIVE DOCTOR HENRY GRADY. DOCTOR GRADY WON SIXTEEN PERCENT OF THE VOTE TWO YEARS AGO WHEN HE RAN FOR THE SENATE ON A THIRD PARTY TICKET -- BUT HE IS EXPECTED TO DO MUCH BETTER RUNNING AS A REPUBLICAN THIS YEAR. (END OPT)

GH/RCS